1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 439 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used [386 314] to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingʒong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingʒong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyoufaat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingʒong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingʒong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingʒong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used 384] for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[387] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.